Outline of Proposed Research Work for Ph. D. in Management

Examining attitudes and non-price purchase determinants of counterfeit fashion products among consumers of Rajasthan

राजस्थान के उपभोक्ताओं में नकली फैशन उत्पादों की प्रवृत्ति और गैर मूल्य खरीद निर्धारकों की जांच

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Introduction and importance of the proposed research work

The increase in the number of fashion conscious consumers because of the proliferation of media has resulted in the increase in demand of fashion products in the market. People's attitudes towards investing and spending money are also changing with times. Moreover consumer demand is also increasing due to the pursuit of status goods and the desire of being in tune with fashions and fads (Eisend and Schuchert-Güler, 2006). The craze to own brands has in turn increased fake or counterfeited replicas of the same in the market. While the financially worse off consumers tend to buy cheaper products, such as private labels, non-branded or even fake goods, rich consumers are investing more into products on the opposite end of the price scale. In the developing economies the market with counterfeit goods is growing (Kasl, 2012). Counterfeiting becomes a flourishing industry, especially in Asia. It will not only reduce the profit of global labels, but also does damage to these firms in terms of brand value and brand prestige. Many researchers have discussed this problem and pay their attentions on why do consumers buy counterfeit luxury brands (Wilcox et al., 2009).

Fashion products are, as defined by the American Marketing Association (AMA), a subcategory of a shopping product which contains items that are wanted by consumers for their fashion aspect. These include consumer goods where style holds the primary importance, and the price is secondary. In the fashion industry, for example, counterfeit goods can be found in a number of product items, such as clothing, leather goods, shoes, watches, and jewelry products (Yoo & Lee, 2009). Branded clothes, sportswear, shoes, handbags and watches are still predominant products, when it comes to the question of fake goods in public discourse (Kasl, 2012). It is not surprising since the more successful and popular a brand name, the more likely it will have counterfeits (Nia & Zaichkowsky, 2000). Asia and South America

have been suggested as the largest sources for counterfeit and pirated products (Ritson, 2007).

According to Webster's New World Dictionary, original is something that is "initial, earliest, never having occurred or existed before and not copied", while counterfeit is something "made in imitation of something genuine so as to deceive or defraud". Counterfeits of brands are commonly defined as the reproduction or replicated version of the genuine article, usually of a well-known trademarked brand. The copy resembles the genuine article in details such as packaging, colour, labelling, and trademark so as to pass off as the genuine (Ang *et al.*, 2001). Luxury brands are more vulnerable targets to counterfeiters as they are popular with consumers (Shultz and Soporito, 1996). Counterfeit products are considered as illegal, since they are made without permission of the original brand owners. These products copy or imitate the physical appearance of an original product to mislead consumers that they are the same as the originals (OECD, 1998). Such pirated products usually have low quality and are sold at a very cheap price. Interestingly, unlike many other industries, the purchasers of counterfeit fashion products usually know that they are buying a fake product (Triandewi and Tjiptono, 2013).

Counterfeits, especially in fashion products, have long attracted many consumers around the globe. Price is one of the most important issues in affecting consumer intention to buy original brands and counterfeits. Counterfeit products are illegal, cheap, and poor quality duplications of prestigious branded products (Lai & Zaichkowsky, 1999), whereas genuine products are high priced and have premium quality. Many consumers, particularly in developing countries, do not mind purchasing low quality pirated products. For those who love fashion but cannot afford to purchase original designer clothing, having a look-alike product provides them an opportunity to enjoy the prestige of the luxury and popular brand (Triandewi and Tjiptono, 2013). Counterfeit goods presented as real versions of products may deceive consumers

(Zaichkowsky, 1995), but for prestige and luxury goods, consumers are often willing accomplices rather than victims of deception (Bloch et al., 1993).

Availability of the counterfeited fashion products like clothes, footwear, belts, wallets, bags, belts, watches etc. at a much lower price than the original versions has prompted the consumers, who otherwise cannot afford to buy the original brands, to buy them. Commonly, consumers purchasing counterfeits of luxury brands are willing to pay for the visual attributes and functions without paying for the associate quality (Cordell *et al.*, 1996). Apart from the economic reasons, there are other factors too that influence the purchase behaviour of the consumers.

Importance of the proposed work of research

There is no work that has been carried out on counterfeit fashion products in Rajasthan. The research will therefore:

a) Add to the existing literature on counterfeit fashion products and the factors that influence the purchase intentions.
b) Allow the fashion brand manufacturers further insights into strategizing their anti-counterfeiting campaigns and help in careful tailoring of branded products' advertisements that appeal to the consumers and dissuade them from buying counterfeits.
c) Guide further researches in similar areas.

Objectives of research

1. To ascertain the relationship between demographics and counterfeit fashion products purchase intention.
2. To investigate consumer attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit fashion products and whether these attitudes correlate with and predict counterfeit consumption.
3. To examine the psychological aspect of counterfeit fashion products' purchase by analyzing the impact of personality traits on counterfeit fashion products purchase intention.

Review of work already done on the subject

Literature on attitudes toward counterfeiting have examined a host of factors including economic, quality, legal, and ethical issues that shape and influence attitudes of consumers purchasing counterfeits of luxury brands (e.g. Ang et al., 2001; Eisend and Schuchert-Güler, 2006). Fundamentally, consumers will consider purchasing counterfeits of luxury brands when functional needs are met. However, the associated prestige and status symbol that the trademarked brand exudes is an even stronger propellant for consumers to purchase counterfeits of luxury brands (Cordell et al., 1996; Wang et al., 2005).

The purchase of counterfeits varies across income, education, age, and gender. For instance, in case of counterfeit (pirated) software, Solomon and O'Brien (1991) reported that consumers' age, educational background, and family economic background influence the attitudes. However some studies reported that demographic variables do not influence the purchase of counterfeits (Bloch et al. 1993), while others argued that they do matter (Cheung and Prendergast, 2006) but in an inconsistent manner.

Previous studies by Ang et al. (2001), Tan (2002) and Kwong et al. (2003) on counterfeit software i.e. pirated software have found that males have more positive attitudes towards piracy than females. Similarly when purchase intention of technical items is concerned the relationship between buying and using behavior is stronger amongst men than women (Moores and Chang, 2006). As far as fashion products are concerned females are more likely to be heavy buyers of pirated clothing and accessories (Cheung and Prendergast, 2006). Cheung and Prendergast (2006), based on 1,152 adult consumers from Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Wuhan, showed that high-income families, people with tertiary education, younger consumers, and males are more likely to be heavy buyers of pirated VCDs and that females are more likely to be heavy buyers of pirated clothing and accessories.

However Bloch et al. (1993) state that demographic variables do not distinguish between the choice groups and there is no significant difference for demographics as far as counterfeit purchase is concerned. Previous studies have reported contradictory findings on the relationship between individual income and the purchase of counterfeits. Phau et al. (2001) and Prendergast et al. (2002) suggested that buyers of counterfeits are not necessarily from lower socioeconomic groups. Kwong et al. (2003) demonstrated that income is not related to pirated product purchase. An increase of income can increase the intention to buy counterfeit brands. Phau et al. (2001) suggested that the poor are likely to spend less than the rich on counterfeit-branded clothing.

Moores (2008) also showed that countries with a higher per capita national income showed less counterfeiting and piracy.

Age appears to influence attitudes toward, and consequently the purchase of, counterfeits. Older people were more likely than younger people to exhibit idealistic ethics (Rawwas and Singhapakdi, 1998) and stronger business ethics (Ruegger and King, 1992). However, Wee et al. (1995) reported that age did not explain the purchase of counterfeits, especially after controlling for education level and household income.

According to the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), the purchase behaviour is determined by the purchase intention, which is in turn determined by attitudes (Ajzen, 1991). When consumers have more favourable attitude towards counterfeiting, chances are higher that they will purchase counterfeit brands. Similarly, if they hold unfavourable attitudes towards counterfeiting, the less are the chances of purchase (Wee et al., 1995). Most people think that almost everyone else is buying counterfeit goods; in addition, they do not even hesitate to admit that they buy them too (Kasl, 2012). Ang et al. (2001) suggested that informative susceptibility, normative susceptibility, value consciousness, integrity, and personal gratification influence

consumer attitude toward counterfeits. Phau et al. (2009) proposed brand consciousness, personal gratification, value consciousness, price-quality inference, social influence, brand prestige as the main antecedents of attitudes toward luxury counterfeits.

Leonard, Cronon, and Kreie (2004) found that an individual's attitude and personal characteristics are two statistically significant predictors of ethical behavioral intentions.

Among many individual characteristics, Yoo and Lee (2009) found that there are three significant antecedents, i.e. materialism, perceived future social status, and self-image.

Value consciousness is defined as the concern for paying lower prices for products but subjected to some quality constraints (Lichtenstein *et al.*, 1990). A lower price with a slightly substandard quality is still considered value for money (Wang *et al.*, 2005). Consumers who purchase genuine luxury brands pursue value for brand, prestige and image benefits, but at the same time may be unwilling to pay the high price for it (Bloch *et al.*, 1993). As the counterfeited products are priced much less than the original versions, consumers perceive counterfeits of luxury brands as "value for money" (Furnham and Valgeirsson, 2007). Hence people who are value conscious are inclined to have a positive attitude towards counterfeit fashion products. Phau and Teah (2009) suggest that there is a significant relationship between consumers' level of value consciousness and their likelihood of buying counterfeit luxury brands, suggesting that value-conscious consumers may see counterfeit products as a better deal than the actual status brand.

Gentry *et al.* (2001) say that counterfeits provide novelty. Novelty seeking is the curiosity of individuals to seek variety and difference (Wang *et al.*, 2005). Since the counterfeit products are cheaper therefore there is less price related risk. This

encourages the consumers to try new things and hence the low cost of counterfeit products are well suited to satisfy their curiosity and the need for experimentation (Wee *et al.*, 1995). However, a study by Phau and Teah (2009) asserts that novelty seeking has no significant relationship towards attitudes of counterfeit products. Similarly brand status, materialism, novelty seeking, and risk- taking have no influence on the purchase intention and attitudes (Wee *et al.* 1995).

Limited supply of products enhances the consumers' value and preference for a brand (Pantzalis 1995). Moreover scarcity of products has even greater effect on demand if people also perceive the product as unique, popular and expensive (Verhallen and Robben, 1994). Since the counterfeits of fashion brands are available abundantly people who seek uniqueness and rarity are likely to hold negative intentions to purchase counterfeits.

Publicly self-conscious individuals are especially concerned about the impression they make on others (Bush *et al.*, 1989). They succumb to interpersonal influences and are more likely to be concerned about physical appearances and fashion. They tend to associate themselves with the current social class position they are in or the class above them (Mellott, 1983), even if the price of labels may not be affordable for them. They are doing so because of presenting some connotation from prestige of labels. Consumers who cannot afford the price of labels are more likely to purchase counterfeits of luxury brands, displaying the image to others, under the influence of their peers (Mellott, 1983; Bearden et al., 1989)

Self conscious individuals are also more compliant with standards in the society and are more sensitive to interpersonal rejections. Depending on their social group norm, the pressure from a reference group can induce the consumer’s decision to use original or counterfeits of luxury brands (Bearden *et al.*, 1989). The pressure from peers as their perspectives on counterfeits is the most important driver (Bearden et al., 1989). Consumers are assumed to look for congruence between product attributes and

their self-image (Solomon, 2009). They tend to choose and buy products whose characteristics match their own to impress important other people and show their identity through the product image (Triandewi and Tjiptono, 2013). People buy fashion products to satiate their fashion cravings and also to show off their possessions. Studies suggest that consumers form positive attitudes toward things that help them define their social and personal identities by expressing who they are, who they want to be and how they want others to see them (Shavitt, 1989). Fashion-related goods as well as clothing may be an especially effective product category in this regard (O'Cass, 2001).

A consumer's consumption pattern is a reflection of his or her social class position. If brand status is important to consumers, but they are unable to afford the expensive originals, they are likely to turn to the counterfeit brands as cheaper substitutes. When a consumer evaluates her or his future social status to be high, she or he will become less price-sensitive and select genuine fashion products whose prices are, for instance, ten times more expensive than those of corresponding counterfeits. That way, perceived future social status is positively linked to intention of buying the genuine products (Yoo and Lee, 2009).

The ability to consume prestige brands is viewed as a signal of status and wealth. Thus, when a brand is more prestigious, consumers will be more likely to purchase it to reflect their status. Consumers who seek to possess brands that exude brand symbols to reflect their self-identity will therefore be uninterested in owning an "inferior" counterfeit (Hoe et al., 2003). Consumers purchase products whose image matches their self-image to impress others. Self-image concerns itself with issues like "how I am seen by others" (Sirgy and Danes 1982). Therefore, status consciousness and high self-image positively affect purchase intention of originals because genuine products convey the image of affluence, wealth, and social class that match high self-image (Wee et al., 1995).

Materialism refers to the importance people attach to material possessions (Belk, 1985; Solomon, 2009). For materialistic consumers, possessions have a crucial position in their lives. They believe that such possessions are the sources of personal satisfaction, pleasure, and happiness; symbols of success or achievement; and representations of indulgence and luxury (Peter & Olson, 2008; Schiffman, et al., 2010). Materialists place "possessions and their acquisition at the center of their lives" and view them "as essential to their satisfaction and well-being in life" (Richins and Dawson, 1992). Their primary goal of material possessions is to impress others rather than themselves (Yoo and Lee, 2009).

In the context of counterfeit purchase, both counterfeits and original products can satisfy materialistic mind of many consumers since both products look-alike. In their study, Yoo and Lee (2009) found that materialism positively affects both purchase intention of counterfeits and originals.

An individual would appear almost the same regardless of whether she/he wears an original or a fake fashion product. Penz and Stottinger (2005) suggested that the only difference is that the original product consumers buy the genuine brands for what exclusive luxury brands really mean, whereas counterfeit product consumers buy just the social recognition and status of the genuine brands without paying for it.

Research gaps identified in the proposed field of investigation

Most of the researches done on counterfeit products are focused on China, Indonesia and some western countries. But not much work is done on the topic in India. Since India has emerged as a major hub in fashion industry it becomes imperative to delve into the consumer psyche.

The gaps identified in the proposed investigation are as follows:

1. By reviewing the literature, it has been found that most of the researches are focused on countries other than India. So research can be done to examine whether similar factors are applicable in Indian scenario or not. Also with the voluminous increase in counterfeit market in India there is a need to explore the factors affecting the phenomenon.
2. Non-price factors are less discussed in the literature, so there is a need to explore the non-price factors that influence the purchase of counterfeit fashion products.

Hypotheses

1) Impact of demographics on the intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products

a) Gender has no impact on the intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products

b) There is no impact of age on the intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products

c) Consumer's income is negatively related with the intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products i.e. higher the income lesser the intention.

d) There is no impact of consumer's education level on the intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products

2) Consumers with positive attitudes towards counterfeits of fashion products have higher intention to purchase counterfeits of fashion products.

3) Effect of personality traits on counterfeit fashion products purchase

a) Value conscious consumers have a positive attitude towards counterfeits of fashion brands

b) Consumers who are novelty seekers have a positive attitude towards counterfeits of fashion brands

c) Consumers who have a desire for uniqueness have negative intention to purchase counterfeits of fashion brands

d) Susceptibility to interpersonal influence is related to purchase intention of counterfeit fashion products

e) Status consciousness has a negative influence on intention to purchase counterfeits of fashion brands

f) Materialism is positively related with the intention to purchase counterfeits of fashion brands

Research Methodology

Research is a process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting information to answer questions in order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon about which we are concerned or interested. It is a systematic investigative process employed to increase or revise current knowledge by discovering new facts.

Research methodology may include publication research, interviews, surveys and other research techniques, and could include both present and historical information. The researcher proposes the following research methodology for the study:

Research design

Research design is a detailed outline of how an investigation will take place. A research design will typically include how data is to be collected, what instruments will be employed, how the instruments will be used and the intended means for analyzing data collected.

This study will be an empirical research based in a large measure on the collection of primary data and also the secondary data.

Source of information

Primary as well as secondary data sources will be used to generate evidence to supplement the research design.

The primary source of data will include the responses from the customers of Rajasthan which will be collected by the means of a structured questionnaire.

The secondary sources include similar researches published in the forms of papers and articles in different journals, newspapers, websites, magazines etc.

Sampling plan

Universe

Universe, in the context of research, can be defined as the collection, population, or set of entities, items, or quantities (grouped together on the basis of common or defining characteristics or features) from which a representative sample is drawn for comparison or measurement.

For this study, the entire citizens of Rajasthan are considered as population from where the sample has to be derived.

Sampling technique

The respondents will be selected on the basis of convenience and judgmental sampling by the researcher.

Sample size

The researcher expects to cover a sample size of 500-600 customers for the purpose of study.

Pilot survey

The drafted questionnaire will be initially administered on 40-50 respondents so as to ascertain its reliability and validity. It will also help to explore uncovered important issues and will also help in removing discrepancies, if any.

Research instrument

A structured questionnaire will be used as the research instrument. It will contain close-ended questions aimed at meeting the research objectives.

Tools for analysis

The data will be analyzed through various statistical techniques like measures of central tendency, correlation, chi-square test and Analysis of Variance. The analysis would be done on SPSS software to ensure speed and reliability of research work. The empirical results shall be discussed with reference to managerial and theoretical implications.

Limitations of the study

Since the study will be based on the responses entered by the respondents, personal bias may creep in.

The chapter wise details of research work

Chapter 1: Introduction

The introductory chapter will include an overview of the market trends of counterfeit fashion products. It will also discuss the various aspects of consumer buying behavior.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter will throw light on the research work that has already been done in this field. It will aim at substantiating the research objectives and hypothesis.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter would lay out the objectives for this research study. The chapter shall also discuss the research methodology to be used in the study.

Chapter 4: Analysis of data

This chapter will present the result of the study analyzed using the appropriate tools and techniques. Various hypotheses framed for the study would be tested and the result disclosed. Finding and results will be presented by using various statistical tools.

Chapter 5: Recommendations

This chapter will discuss the recommendations for strategizing the anti-counterfeiting campaigns for fashion brands.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

This chapter will summarize the conclusions, interpreted from the analysis of data.

Bibliography

Annexures

Expected duration of the work

Expected duration of the work is two years. Year wise Programme is: -

1. Field work and conceptual work will be completed within one year from the date of registration in university.

2. Analysis, interpretation and written work will be completed in next six months and in remaining time computers and typing work will be completed.

3. Research work will be produced to the university with in minimum period of two year prescribed by the university.

Time Plan of the proposed research is as follows:

Coursework	6 Months
Review of literature	3 Months
Testing and development of questionnaire	3 Months
Collection of data	5 Months
Analysis of data	3 Months
Compilation and report writing	3 Months
Binding and submission	1 Month

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